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MEMORANDUM FOR: MAJOR GENERAL S. LeROY IRWIN, GSC
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2
Department of the Army

SUBJECT: Central Registry of Personality Files on
Individuals of Intelligence and Security
Interest

REFERENCE: Memorandum to Chairman, IAC, from ACofS,
G-2, dated 20 July 1950

1. The reference concerns itself with two problems, one of which is of a security rather than a biographic nature. The security problem itself has two aspects:

a. The collection, filing, indexing, and dissemination of information facilitating security checks on American citizens and other individuals resident or transient in the United States; and

b. The collection, filing, indexing, and dissemination of information facilitating security checks on individuals resident or found in foreign areas during possible future military operations.

2. The problems mentioned in Paragraph 1a is not within the sphere of responsibility of this Agency, but is rather a responsibility of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. CIA is not a member of the internal security committees chaired by the FBI.

3. Toward solution of the problem mentioned in Paragraph 1b, this Agency using IBM indexing techniques has on hand or has access to biographic information on approximately 2,000,000 foreign individuals, about three fourths of whom are recorded under CIA's responsibilities for security rather than for purposes of positive biographic intelligence.

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4. It is true that holdings of information on foreign nationals are scattered, and that there does not now exist any single biographic facility embracing all available information concerning them. It is believed that files of biographic information maintained for counter-intelligence purposes are kept separate, in each of the IAC agencies, from the files maintained for positive biographic intelligence purposes. The security considerations which prevent merging these two types of files within each of the agencies would undoubtedly apply, perhaps with even greater force, to the larger undertaking which you have suggested for consideration. It is proposed, therefore, that the counter-intelligence personality files of the several agencies be treated as a separate problem, and that consideration be given to the desirability of developing a central machine index to all of them. Such an index would be a costly undertaking, but if generally regarded as of sufficient value to the government it should be seriously considered. It is understood that a preliminary study on such an IBM index yielded no favorable results.

5. On the positive side of biographic intelligence, however, separate files are maintained by each of the IAC agencies as well as by several others. State Department's Biographic Intelligence unit holds dossiers on about 100,000 foreign nationals, and these have been machine-indexed by CIA at State Department's request, so an index of these names is available in CIA. Under NSCID 8 the Biographic Register of this Agency has built up dossiers and a machine index on some 60,000 foreign scientists and technologists, and it has in addition prepared machine indices to the names of some 250,000 foreign nationals mentioned in intelligence documents held by CIA. Extension of this indexing system to embrace the names of foreign nationals recorded for positive intelligence purposes in all the IAC agencies would be costly, but not impossible.

6. I should be glad to receive from the IAC members specific statements of needs in the two spheres of foreign biographic intelligence, the positive and the counter-intelligence. Central machine indexing, separate for each of the two spheres, might be undertaken if there is agreement that such indices would be of value to all, and agreement that all agencies would contribute to the two indices names and essential summary biographic information held by them on foreign nationals.

7. Such indices might be a first step toward the complete centralization of foreign biographic intelligence which you have

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suggested for consideration. They might lead the way toward the larger undertaking of maintaining in one place both indices and dossiers, which would be very costly in itself but which might result in 1) greatly increased efficiency, 2) budgetary and manpower savings in the several IAC agencies, and 3) a net saving to the Federal Government.

R. H. HILLENKOETTER
Rear Admiral, USN
Director of Central
Intelligence

cc: Other Members of the Intelligence
Advisory Committee.

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